



MINUTES

Draft pending approval by 2020 AGM

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7:15pm on 28th March 2019 at the School Hall, Holy Family School, Vale Lane

The meeting was attended by approx. 40 residents of houses and flats on the Estate.

Welcome and apologies

Hugh Richards, HHGERA Chairman, welcomed those present and outlined the format of the meeting, as set out in the meeting notice and agenda delivered to all houses and flats in advance. This would first be constituted as an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), with a single agenda item to approve the new HHGERA constitution. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) would follow immediately afterwards, following the format set out in the constitution if approved.

Apologies were received from Bill Bailey, Anthea Douglas, Alexandra Turner, John Stone, Renate Sohlen-Theime, John Ward and Mrs Harries-Jones. Hanger Hill ward councillors Joy Morrissey and Nigel Sumner were both in attendance, along with PC Prabjeet Bhogal and PCSO Ikram Syed from the Hanger Hill Safer Neighbourhoods Police team.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING: HHGERA CONSTITUTION

The Chairman set out the process to be followed. The draft constitution had been made available to members on the HHGERA website and in hard copy at Japan Services' offices ahead of the meeting; the text was also available in the hall. He would outline some minor amendments as a result of the consultation exercise, open discussion to the floor and then put the matter to the vote. A two-thirds majority of those present (based on one vote per property) would be required to approve the change.

There being no challenge to the process outlined, Hugh recalled that the current HHGERA rules dated back to 1993, since when much had changed. The key points in the constitution would:

- Define the area covered by HHGERA;
- Define the communal gardens and service roads owned by HHGER Ltd;
- Clarify the governance of HHGERA and of HHGER Ltd;
- Formalise items currently set out on hhgera.com such as rules of use of the houses' service roads;
- Include information on the Deeds of Easement to be signed by house owners, explaining who required them, why and when;
- Introduce clauses on equality and data protection; and
- Provide a new management structure with more clearly defined roles.

The new structure, he continued, consisted of two parts: HHGERA and the Houses Management Board.

HHGERA would continue to undertake the conventional activities of an area-based residents association for all flat and house residents. This included commenting on planning applications, liaison with Ealing Council and councillors, Transport for London, the Police and other bodies on issues such as security, highways, refuse and recycling, and Houses in Multiple Occupation. It also included production of the Newsletter, social activities such as PlayStreets and litter-picking, liaison with the Flats Management Board and generally fostering a sense of community on the Estate.

The new **Houses Management Board** (broadly taking the place of the HHGERA Houses Committee) would be responsible for managing, maintaining and improving the communal gardens and service roads owned by HHGER Ltd. To pay for this, it would continue to levy and manage the houses' annual service charge (but not the service charge for flats, which was for the Flats Management Board) and investigate other sources of funding.

Hugh underlined that all these activities were already undertaken so the new constitution largely formalised the current position. However, it would improve transparency around the activities and operation of the residents association and the distinct management role of the Houses Management Board on behalf of HHGER Ltd.

He said a sub-group had been set up to produce the first draft of the document, which had been discussed by the existing committee members (representing both houses and flats) and shared with the Flats Management Board. It had taken around four months to get to the stage where all committee members were in agreement. Bill Bailey and Anthea Douglas (respectively HHGERA's former Chair and Vice-Chair) – and indeed all of the committee members – had been fully involved in the process.

Numerous major and minor tweaks and changes had been made until an agreed version 7.1 of the draft was reached, which was put out to wider consultation via the EGM notice and covering letter. Because of the work undertaken in the earlier stages, this had produced far fewer comments – just three in total, comprising:

- A request for a governance diagram: Hugh said the team had been working on this but had lacked the technical expertise to produce one in time for the meeting. Since it would illustrate the governance detailed in the constitution rather than change it in any way, it had been decided to include the diagram on hhgera.com, if or when it was produced, rather than including it within the constitution itself. The HHGERA officers would welcome help with this from a graphic artist, if there was one living on the Estate who was willing to volunteer their services.
- A request that consideration be given to having two tiers of service charge for houses with and without access to a service road maintained by the Houses Management Board. The committee had been split on this one – Hugh revealed that he had supported the idea and everyone else had opposed it. As a first step, it had been agreed to split out actual spending on service roads from that on the communal gardens (with which it was traditionally combined) to see how the costs broke down. The idea would be reviewed again next year in light of the new evidence. The same resident had requested that the HHGERA accounts and budgets be made available on the Association's website. There had been some concerns about security of residents' funds when this was discussed previously, but subject to further consideration of the risks Hugh said this would be arranged. In the meantime, any resident was welcome to view the accounts and budget on request.
- A request for further information on the changes permitted to properties on the Estate with and without planning permission. Hugh said this information was contained in the HHGE Conservation Area Design Guide and Management Plan and the Article 4 direction. Since these

were live documents, it would not be sensible to try and provide a summary, but links were available at www.hhgera.com/conservation-and-planning. The HHGE Management Plan contained a much better map of the Estate than the one shown in Appendix A of the draft constitution, as that cut off some of the flats, so it was proposed to update Annex A to show the whole Estate conservation area as well. The constitution would also refer to the HHGERA website and the links it contained to the key documents.

The Chairman concluded his presentation by reading out comments from one resident with professional expertise reviewing and amending constitutions for associations:

“Basically I am very pleased with the draft. It is much clearer than its predecessor document and it updates the constitution in general terms (by inserting modern clauses about data protection and equality) and in specific terms (e.g. the revised use of the service roads for refuse collection)... I think the proposed revised constitution is a great improvement on its predecessor and I hope it will get a smooth passage.”

The draft constitution was opened to questions and observations from the floor. Two issues were aired:

- **Governance:** Residents asked why HHGER Ltd, as freeholder of the service roads and gardens associated with houses on the Estate, was owned by just four of its directors, rather than every house owner having one share each; did this not mean the arrangement was open to abuse?

Hugh acknowledged that the structure was unusual and explained that it dated back to 1985, when residents had gained control of the houses part of the Estate through HHGER Ltd and established that the company must use the residents association to control and manage the land. Ownership of the flats’ freehold had passed to another company with a very similar name (HHGE Ltd) which was now owned by the leaseholders of the flats, each of whom had did have one share. That company had its own board and raised service charge to cover the cost of the flats’ management in the conventional way.

Although HHGE Ltd had only four directors and shareholders, houses residents controlled all its activities, which were delegated to the Houses Management Committee and subject to the AGM. The governance arrangements set out in the constitution clearly defined the duties of the Houses Management Board, ensured the HHGER Ltd shareholder directors were fully accountable to house owners, and thus put residents, rather than the directors, in control of all the assets. Moving to something like the HHGE Ltd arrangements for the houses part of the Estate would involve very heavy legal costs and potentially weaken resident owners’ position compared with non-resident landlords, so it had been dismissed as an option for now.

- **Skip permits:** Various questions were raised about whether it was necessary – or legal – to introduce a system of skip permits and how this would be administered. Hugh said the legality was watertight, as house owners had no automatic right to do anything other than come and go on the service roads to their garages. There had been power under the 1993 rules to introduce skip permits but nothing had been implemented. Agreement with the Council to collect wheelie bins from service roads had changed things, as it was now imperative to keep the way clear for large recycling lorries as well as other vehicles. Permits would have the added benefit of providing the Houses Management Board with another source of funds. They would also increase the pressure on house owners to sign a Deed of Easement formalising their requirement to contribute a fair share of service charge maintenance costs.

Hugh said the detailed arrangements were still to be worked out, but that the aim was to complete the preparatory work by June 2019 and that forms and guidance would be placed on hhgera.com. If residents were unwilling to seek a permit from the Houses Management Board, they could get their contractor to apply for one from Ealing Council to put a skip on the street. It was envisaged the service road charge would always be set below the Council's fee (currently £50 for 14 days).

After further discussion, a show of hands was held on whether to keep the skip permits provision in the draft constitution, with the price of a permit to be agreed by the Houses Management Board AGM, or delete it and return to the matter in 2020. The meeting agreed to keep the provision, by 16 votes in favour and 3 against.

The draft constitution was then put to the vote and approved by 26 votes in favour and none against.

The Chairman closed the Extraordinary General Meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(conducted under the new constitution)

Minutes of the 2018 AGM

The minutes, which had been available on the HHGERA website since June 2018, were approved without amendment.

HHGERA: Annual report

Kate Crossland, Vice Chair, highlighted some of the issues and activities HHGERA had undertaken during 2018 on behalf of residents of the Estate as a whole. As well as working on the new constitution, these included:

- **Planning:** HHGERA participated in the Conservation Area Panel and had fed into Ealing Council's conservation area review. It had commented on 18 planning applications, mostly for loft conversions and windows, and worked with the Council on Houses in Multiple Occupation. HHGERA had supported the Flats Management Board's application for replacement windows on the blocks of flats, which had unfortunately been turned down. Other local applications, for a 3-storey office block behind Queens Drive and expansion of the Japanese school, had also been refused. However, the controversial Ada Lovelace CofE School development had been given the go-ahead on part of the old Barclays Sports Ground site, between Park View Road and the North Circular. And the West Acton Residents Association was opposing plans to upgrade the Samurai sports facilities on Acton Playing Fields.
- **Community policing:** Aleksandra Turner, the Estate's Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, had been working with OWL, a new online network open to all residents, to improve awareness of crime and crime prevention locally. A 'Cuppa with a Copper' event at Café 11 had provided the evidence needed by Police to raid the second cannabis factory on the Estate in less than a year! PC Boghal and PCSO Syed asked residents to remain vigilant and to contact them via the Safer Neighbourhoods website (www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/met/ealing/hanger-hill/) if they had concerns. (Warning signs included vacant houses with boarded-up windows and visitors at unusual hours of the night.) They acknowledged it sometimes took longer than they would like to act on information received, but as in the case of the latest cannabis factory they needed a lot

of evidence before magistrates would grant a search warrant.

- **Parking:** Kate said HHGERA was watching closely the impact of dual use (residents / pay and display) parking on the Haymills Estate, which residents there had strongly opposed. Hugh was also investigating the scope to install vehicle electric charging points on the Estate.
- **Social events:** There had been lots of these in 2018, including two community gardening mornings, PlayStreets throughout the Summer, community litter picking, a Christmas party for HHGERA committee members, and pub nights at the Greystoke.
- **Communications:** HHGERA kept in touch with residents via the newsletter, which was sponsored by Japan Services and delivered to all houses and flats; the hhgera.com website and Twitter feed (@hhgeranews). Contributions to all of these were welcome.

Kate concluded that all these activities would continue and be built upon during the coming year, when another priority would be to strengthen co-operation with the Flats Management Board. There was a round of applause for the volunteers who undertook this work.

Presentation of accounts and budget for 2019

Levon Agulian, HHGERA Treasurer, presented the accounts, which were available in hard copy in the hall. These covered all activities during 2018 but he said in future the accounts of HHGERA and the Houses Management Board would be produced separately in accordance with the new constitution.

Levon reported an encouraging increase in income during 2018 to £20,495, thanks to the efforts of Neil McNair and his team of houses service charge collectors. As in previous years, the main items of expenditure had been maintenance of the houses' communal gardens and service roads, followed by a large outlay on keys and locks for the service road gates. The operating surplus meant reserves – which had been severely depleted by the 2017 wheelie bins project – had been rebuilt to around to 12 months' expenditure, which was regarded as the prudent level.

There was in addition a keys reserve of £9,675, representing refundable service road key deposits, and £11,377 in hand for the Princes Gardens restoration project. Overall, the Houses Management Board side of the finances was in a much healthier state than for the past two years. HHGERA had its own reserve, currently standing at £5,233, inherited from the former Flats Committee.

As far as 2019 budgets were concerned, Levon said a provisional figure of £250 had been allowed for HHGERA outlays, mostly to cover website hosting and the cost of the AGM. Social activities had traditionally been self-funding and/or sponsored by local businesses, and this was expected to continue. The Houses Management Board budget would be broadly balanced, with increased outlays on gardening and service roads maintenance, and up to £5,000 for legal costs and installing security gates on the service road behind Links Road, Monks Drive and Queens Drive (see below).

The accounts and budgets for both HHGERA and the Houses Management Board were approved without further comment.

Election of Officers and Committee Members

The meeting unanimously elected the HHGERA officers nominated, to serve until the next AGM:

HHGERA Committee

Chair	Hugh Richards
Vice-Chair	Kate Crossland
Treasurer	Levon Agulian
Secretary	Nim Maradas
Communications	Aleksandra Turner/Nim Maradas
Planning and Conservation Area Panel	Bill Bailey/Sergei Turceninoff/Amir Sadjady
Ealing Council liaison	Hugh Richards
Police liaison and Neighbourhood Watch	Aleksandra Turner
Flats Management Board liaison	Kate Crossland/Dion Hitchcock
Social and community events	Ingrid Joannou/Aleksandra Turner

Subscription rate for 2019

The Chairman proposed, and the meeting unanimously agreed, that the HHGERA subscription rate (as distinct from the houses service charge) should be zero for the current year, as the Association had adequate funds in reserve for its Estate-wide activities.

Links/Monks/Queens service road

Hugh reported progress in discussions with the Flats Management Board about the status of this service road, where there were persistent problems with fly tipping and security. He had proposed a licensing agreement to the Flats Management Board (which owned it), which would allow HHGERA to install security gates and manage the road, without affecting the Flats' ownership. HHGERA had agreed to cover the cost of their legal advice and was awaiting the outcome.

Any other business

1. Attention was drawn to a tree trunk on Masons Green Lane (owned by Ealing Council) that was conveniently placed to allow intruders to climb into the neighbouring garden. Cllr Nigel Sumner offered to take this up and asked the resident concerned to contact him directly.
2. Cllr Sumner also reassured the meeting he was pursuing the long running issue of the closure of the West Acton post office. He was not optimistic that the decision would or could be reversed but he was hopeful that the misleading shop front would be removed. As the Ashbourne Grove post office was also closing, our nearest counter service would be at Ealing Common.
3. Various observations were made about parking, where aggressive enforcement was being experienced by parents dropping off their children at local primary schools – it was suggested that staggered starts and ends to the school day might help – and residents on the Princes Gardens loop were being ticketed for parking on allocated spots. Hugh said he was aware of the latter problem and would take it up again with Ealing Council. Cllr Sumner drew attention to the Council's new parking app from 1 April (PayByPhone) and added that 'stop-and-shop' parking was being withdrawn across the borough, including at Queens Drive. Hugh said HHGERA would object to this last proposal.
4. Cllr Joy Morrissey drew attention to the successful campaign to save the Accident & Emergency departments at Ealing and Charing Cross hospitals.
5. A spate of recent burglaries led to questions about CCTV and installing window/door grilles on the blocks of flats. The Police officers present reminded residents to take sensible precautions

against break-ins, including gating side passages and ensuring cars were kept locked at all times. As some of this was easier for house residents than those in flats, Hugh offered to share the concerns with the Flats Management Board.

At this point, the Chairman declared the HHGERA AGM formally closed and invited the Police to leave, along with any Flats residents who did not wish to stay for the Houses Management Board AGM.

Houses Management Board: annual report

Hugh drew attention to some highlights of 2018 for the houses part of the Estate:

- **Gardens:** The hot, dry summer could have caused huge problems for the new planting on the Princes Gardens central reservation and the many new street trees in and around the Estate. However, volunteers organised by the residents had kept up a watering schedule and saved just about every tree! Unfortunately, the big old Horse Chestnut on the corner of Queens Drive and Monks Drive had become unsafe and had to be cut down. Not many people realised the garden it stood in belonged to HHGER Ltd – so thanks were due to Isabel Mahoney, among others, for keeping it looking good on a voluntary basis.
- **Flooding:** Hugh said blocked drainage had been a persistent problem for residents of one house on Princes Gardens, whose garden regularly flooded in heavy rain. Investigation had revealed a system of interceptor pits designed to control and clean any flood water. Unfortunately, these appeared not to have been maintained since the Estate was built – with the result that water cascaded into the garden in question. He had taken up the cudgels on this with Ealing Council and Thames Water, which had somewhat reluctantly resolved the problem after approximately 10 visits. He did not think there were similar problems elsewhere on the Estate but residents were asked to ensure builders did not flush out cement buckets into service road drains, as this was likely over time to set solid!
- **Refuse and recycling:** Another persistent problem was missed refuse collections, particularly on the two Tudor Gardens service roads with communal bins. The Association had met Council officials and the contractor to push for more reliable and weekly collections of both refuse and recycling communal bins rather than every other week. However, this was yet to be resolved.
- **Service road gates:** Hugh reported that estimates had been received to repair corrosion damage on the houses service road gates but that it would be more cost effective simply to replace them when they eventually failed. £1,500 a year would therefore be set aside in the budget over the next few years to build up a gate replacement fund. Mul-T-Lock, the manufacturer of the gate locks, had ceased making these locks a few years ago, and had also now stopped making key blanks. It had required lobbying of the industry regulator and the Consumer Council to persuade them to do a production run just for us. The Houses Management Board had purchased 350 key blanks and 10 spare cylinder locks, which should last for around 20 years. Keys for all the gates were now available from Japan Services with a completed application form (downloadable from www.hhgera.com/service-roads).

Presentation of accounts and budget for 2019

It was noted that Houses Management Board accounts and budget had been approved earlier in the meeting.

Election of Officers

The meeting unanimously elected the officers nominated, to serve until the next AGM:

Houses Management Board

Chair	Hugh Richards
Treasurer	Levon Agulian
Communications	Nim Maradas
HHGER Ltd Company Secretary	Levon Agulian
Annual Service Charge co-ordinator	Neil McNair/Bill Bailey
Gardens co-ordinator	John Stone
Service roads co-ordinator	Amir Sadjady

Princes Gardens Restoration Project

Hugh outlined progress on the project to restore the central gardens, which had been financed by a 2017 crowdfunding campaign. The pilot section replanted in Winter of 2017/18 had bedded in nicely, thanks in no small part to a team of volunteers who had watered it through last year's drought; its Spring bulbs, shrubs and trees were currently in flower. The remaining area had now been cleared of dead trees and undergrowth, new shrubs and perennials had been put in and 15 new trees were expected imminently, donated by Transport for London. Japan Services had also donated 10 bird boxes which were put up before the nesting season and would be monitored to see which species they attracted. A bit more work was needed at the southern end, including planting wildflower meadow, and more flowering bulbs would be planted in the Autumn, but the project was now 95% complete.

Hugh said enough money was left in the project pot to maintain the area for the first couple of years, hire a standpipe from Thames Water and pay the Estate gardeners to do the watering this Summer as the area was too large to be handled by volunteers. He added that the residents he had talked to were very positive about the changes, noting in particular that the Princes Gardens straight section felt much safer at night now that both sides were visible through the central reservation. He said the Houses Management Board would be working on a plan to ensure all the Estate's gardens were looking at their best by its 100th anniversary in 2028, and would report back on this to next year's AGM.

Service charge for 2019

The Chairman proposed, and the meeting unanimously agreed, that the houses service charge should be held at £60 for the current year.

Any other business

Hugh proposed that the price of a skip permit should be set at £40 for four weeks once a system had been set up in June. By then he promised detailed arrangements would be set out on the HHGERA website and notices, summarising the rules of use, would be placed on all houses service roads. This sparked a general discussion about waste being dumped and antisocial parking in service roads, with strong support from those present for a firmer line against offenders. On a show of hands, the pricing proposal was then carried unanimously.

The Chairman thanked residents for their support and closed the meeting at approximately 9:30 pm.